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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 001136

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR J. FRAZER
LONDON FOR C. GURNEY
PARIS FOR C. NEARY
NAIROBI FOR T. PFLAUMER
BANGKOK FOR WIN DAYTON
DS/OP/AF

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [ASEC](#) [Z1](#)
SUBJECT: MDC IN RETREAT - MASS ACTION DAY THREE

REF: A. HARARE 1122

- [1](#)B. HARARE 1101
- [1](#)C. HARARE 1097
- [1](#)D. HARARE 1081

Classified By: Political Officer Audu Besmer for reasons 1.5 b/d

Summary:

[1](#)1. (C) Youth militia members in military garb beat MDC activists, mostly in Harare's high-density suburbs on the night of June 3 - 4. The Minister of Foreign Affairs delivered a prepared statement to the diplomatic community condemning the international community for its double standard toward the GOZ and the MDC. This week's events have left the MDC in disarray and panic, and will likely cause them to re-think their strategy in the coming weeks. End Summary.

MDC Activists Beaten

[1](#)2. (C) According to MDC Presidential Advisor, Gandhi Mudzingwa, what appeared to be youth militia members in military vehicles, with military garb and some carrying AK-47 assault rifles beat numerous MDC activists in high-density areas around Harare, and at the University of Zimbabwe on the night of June 3 - 4. Mudzingwa reported that 21 people had sought medical help from the MDC's social welfare office. On June 4, Polloff visited the casualty ward of the Avenues Clinic in central Harare and saw 30 or so persons in the waiting room with casts on their arms, bloodied bandages on their hands, and various visible cuts and bruises. According to the Matron on duty, Elizabeth Sibotshiwe, Avenues had about 15 more cases than usual of soft tissue injuries (what equates to a 50 percent increase)--an increase similar to the last MDC led stayaway. The injuries were consistent with baton blows; most were minor, only one so far would necessitate an overnight stay.

[1](#)3. (C) (Comment: If 15 extra people from the high density areas made it all the way to the center of town to the Avenues clinic, and 21 made it to the MDC offices - with petrol and transportation shortages as they are, and assuming many may not be seeking medical attention - we would guess the total number of those beaten in the Harare area to be much higher. End Comment.)

One Dead

[1](#)4. (C) According to the MDC Information Department and Mudzingwa police abducted Sydney Mazaranhanga, an MDC councilor from Mbare, and Tichaona Kaguru, an MDC activist, from Mazaranhanga's home on the night of June 3. Police beat the two severely, and released them in Mabvuku. Kaguru died of injuries sustained on June 4. Although the MDC Information Department also reported that 2 people were killed in Highfield on Monday, and 3 students were killed at UZ on the night of June 3 - there has been no independent confirmation of those deaths.

[1](#)5. (C) Mudzingwa said the MDC had no concrete plans to attempt more marches this week. He said some hoped for a march in Harare on June 6, but with activists beaten they were in panic and disarray and would be unlikely to pull it off.

MFA Criticizes West

[1](#)6. (U) The Minister of Foreign Affairs delivered a prepared statement at a briefing for chiefs of diplomatic missions on June 4 condemning the international community for supporting the MDC's illegal mass action. The statement criticized the international community's double standard of condemning the GOZ for subverting the rule of law, while it turned a blind

eye as the MDC subverted a high court order by staging a mass action which resulted in the death of a ZANU-PF supporter in Mbare. The statement was critical of the June 3 G8 statement, but applauded the recent Mbeki, Obasanjo, Muluzi "African" initiative to find solutions to Zimbabwe's problems.

Stayaway Losing Ground

17. (U) Driving around Harare on June 4, Poloffs observed that only about 50 percent of shops in downtown Harare, and 90 percent of businesses in the light industrial areas of Harare were closed. Pedestrian and vehicle traffic in downtown Harare seemed almost normal. Activity in the high-density suburb of Mbare seemed normal.

18. (SBU) One or two groups of 3 police officers were visible in downtown Harare on June 4; they assumed very relaxed postures.

19. (C) According to Sheba Dube, head of the Bulawayo chapter of Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) about 50 percent of businesses in downtown Bulawayo were closed on June 4, and there was light vehicle and pedestrian traffic in Bulawayo. According to Richard Pope, a furniture manufacturer in Bulawayo, about 25 percent of his workers did not show up on June 4. His factory was open, but running at reduced capacity. He said many other factories nearby were theoretically "open", i.e. they would tell inquiring police they were open; however, due to worker shortages they were not actually operating.

110. (C) Due to the difficulties the MDC was experiencing in maintaining the stayaway, Mudzingwa said the MDC may call the stayaway a victory in tomorrow's press and allow businesses to reopen.

Comment:

111. (C) Through a predictable campaign of violence on the night of June 3 - 4, the GOZ had the MDC in even faster retreat on June 4 with the possibility of street demonstrations all but eliminated, and the stayaway barely holding. Mudzingwa's admission that their structures are in disarray and panic suggests the MDC may have to re-think their strategies carefully as the GOZ appears to be coming out ahead after this week's events. End comment.

SULLIVAN